

STUDENT ASSESSMENT NEWS

[Archived Student Assessment News](#)

April 23, 2015

Connecticut State Department Of Education

CTStudentAssessment@ct.gov

860-713-6860

NCSC/CTAA

Please share the following NCSC/CTAA information with NCSC Test Administrators and other appropriate staff. Contact Janet Stuck at janet.stuck@ct.gov or Joe Amenta at joseph.amenta@ct.gov with questions.

- [NCSC Assessment System Frequently Asked Questions 4-20-15](#)
- [NCSC/CTAA Considerations Prior to Closing a Test](#)
- **All NCSC tests must be submitted by 8:00 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2015.**
- For students who are identified as English learners and enrolled for the first time in a U.S. school after March 30, 2014:
 - Administer the mathematics test.
 - **Do not open the ELA test.**
 - Maintain a record of these EL exempt students assessed with the NCSC/CTAA which will be collected in a manner described in the near future.
- NCSC Tip Sheets
 - [How to Unlock Your Account](#)
 - [Moving Students During Test Administration](#)
 - [How to Request Special Forms](#)
 - [How to Capture Evidence Without a Webcam](#)
 - [System Timeout](#)
 - [Submitting Test Results](#)
 - [How to Request Re-opening a Closed Test](#)
- [NCSC Writing FAQ 4-20-15](#)
- [NCSC Writing Instructional and Assessment Resources](#)



DIGITAL LIBRARY

Spotlight on Digital Library Forums

From [May 4 - 8](#), the authors of two Cognitively Based Assessment *of, for, and as* Learning (CBAL) resources will facilitate conversations about the following two modules.

- *The Using Learning Progressions to Formatively Assess Students' Ability to Analyze Arguments* webinar is intended for middle school English language arts teachers. Viewers learn how the classroom tasks - in particular, *Taking a Position* and *Using Claims and Evidence* - connect to argumentation learning progressions and inform instructional decisions based on students' performance.
- *The Using a Learning Progression to Formatively Assess the Concept of Slope* webinar is intended for teachers of first-year algebra. This webinar provides an example of a CBAL formative digital assessment task in the *Linear Functions and Nonlinearity* module that incorporates a learning progression to develop students' deep understanding of the concept of slope. Viewers hear how the learning progression, its application in the task, and ancillary resources support the teacher's use of the task in the classroom.

See the [CBAL Spotlight series flier](#) for information on how to access the CBAL modules and the recorded webinars, as well as how to join the Spotlight Forum discussions.

High School Smarter Balanced Testing

As a reminder, the Grade 11 Smarter Balanced testing window opens on Monday, April 27, 2015.



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How to Activate a Test Session: Summative Assessment – Help Document

To ensure that test administrators correctly administer a summative assessment instead of an interim assessment, the [How to Activate a Test Session: Summative Assessment document](#) provides instructions on how to activate a test session for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in the TA Interface. District and/or School Coordinators are advised to provide each test administrator with a copy of this document.

If a TA inadvertently administers an interim assessment instead of a summative assessment, the TA should end the test session and, if time allows, start a new test session with the correct summative test. This test security incident does not require the submission of an appeal, but should be logged as a test irregularity in a Test Security Incident Log.

Test Setting for English Learner (EL) Exemption – Now Available on TIDE

Some English learners (EL) may be eligible for an exemption from the Smarter Balanced English language arts (ELA)/literacy assessment. For a student to qualify as EL Exempt, the following two conditions must apply:

1. The student is identified as EL and enrolled for the first time in a U.S. school after:
 - March 17, 2014 – Grades 3 - 8;
 - April 27, 2014 – Grade 11 or
2. The student was administered an appropriate language proficiency assessment.

These students can now be noted in TIDE as EL Exempt by opening the “View Student Details” window and selecting EL Exempt on the NonParticipation Code section.

Note: These students are still required to participate in the Smarter Balanced Mathematics assessment.

Medical Exemption Update

Some students may not be able to start or complete the Smarter Balanced assessment due to a medical issue. A student cannot be considered Medically Exempt until the end of the testing window which is June 12, 2015. Medical exemptions must be approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Contact Joe Amenta at 860-713-6855 or Janet Stuck at 860-713-6837 for information about applying for a medical exemption for a student.

The medical exemption setting is available on the “View Student Details” window in TIDE in the NonParticipation Code section. **This setting should only be selected by CSDE staff.**

AIR Smarter Balanced Help Desk

The AIR Smarter Balanced Help Desk is available by calling 844-202-7583 or e-mailing cthelpdesk@air.org. The Help Desk Call Center is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. If districts do not receive a response (or a resolution for issues that have been given a case number) from the AIR Help Desk within 48 hours, please e-mail specifics about the case, including the case number (if applicable) to the Student Assessment Office at CTStudentAssessment@ct.gov.

Smarter Balanced Progress Report

The CSDE recently released the [Smarter Balanced Progress Report](#) to superintendents. This report contains high-level information drawn from the 2014 Smarter Balanced Field Test. The CSDE analyzed Connecticut’s item-level student responses for machine scored items in an effort to provide high-level summary information specific to the Connecticut administration.

REMINDERS:

Designated Supports for EL Students

Students who have test settings in TIDE for the designated supports of **both** Stacked Translation in Spanish and Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics tests will not be able to receive both supports simultaneously. The text-to-speech feature does not function in the test delivery system when Stacked Translation in Spanish is also selected. For students who are identified to receive this combination of supports, the following is an alternative method to provide both supports simultaneously.



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1. The student will need to be individually tested in a separate test setting.
2. A qualified human reader can read the **English** section on the mathematics test. The reader will need to follow the [Guidelines for Read Aloud](#) and sign and return the [Test Reader Connecticut Read Aloud Protocol for Smarter Balanced Assessments Security/Confidentiality Agreement](#).

There is no need to make any changes on the [Accommodations Data Entry Web site](#) or in [TIDE](#). If a student has already been tested and did not receive this combination of designated supports, the parent/guardian should be notified. A decision should be made regarding either allowing the test to stand or providing the student with the opportunity to retest. If the student will retest, please follow this protocol:

- Performance Task: Submit an appeal in TIDE to **re-open** the Mathematics test. This will allow the student to revisit the same performance task with the appropriate supports.
- CAT: Please contact the Student Assessment Office at 860-713-6860 or CTStudentAssessment@ct.gov

Summative Assessment Achievement Level Descriptors

Formerly known as performance levels, new assessment results will be reported as achievement levels. Levels will no longer be named as they were for CMT/CAPT (advanced, goal, proficient, etc.), rather they will be numbered. Please see the [Achievement Level Descriptors](#) document for more information.

Smarter Balanced Appeals Information

For incidents that result in a need to reset, re-open, allow a grace period extension, restore, or invalidate individual student tests, the CSDE must approve the appeal in TIDE. The CSDE approvals and denials will, in most cases, be processed within 24 hours. In most instances, an appeal will be submitted to address a test security breach or irregularity. In some cases, an appeal may be submitted to address incidents that are not security related such as re-opening an assessment for a student who became ill and is unable to resume testing because the test has expired.

Please provide detailed information about the appeal in the “Reason” box when creating it in TIDE so that the appeal may be processed quickly. The chart below provides a description and examples of each type of appeal.

Type of Appeal	Description	Examples
RESET	Resetting a student’s test removes that test from the system and enables the student to start a new test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student is caught cheating or posting images of test items/stimuli on the Internet. • An adult engaged in inappropriate actions that violate test security. • The CSDE may reset a test if any of the following test settings need to be changed because they were incorrectly set while the student was testing (please include the name of the test setting in the “Reason” box): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>American Sign Language (for mathematics and ELA listening)</i> ○ <i>Braille</i> ○ <i>Closed captioning (for ELA listening stimuli)</i> ○ <i>Streamlined interface</i> ○ <i>Spanish Translation—stacked (for mathematics tests only) Note: Stacked translations are automatically provided when the selected language is Spanish.</i> ○ <i>Translation—glossary (for mathematics tests only)</i> ○ <i>Text-to-speech as an accommodation (e.g., for ELA reading passages in Grades 6–8 or 11).</i> ○ Any non-embedded accommodation(s) <p>NOTE: The student’s parent/guardian should be contacted prior to submitting an appeal for a test reset because of a test setting issue. The parent/guardian has the option to allow the test to stand. If the test stands, the change in test settings provided to the student should be documented in a Test Security Incident Log and the CSDE Accommodations Data Entry Web site.</p>



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Type of Appeal	Description	Examples
RE-OPEN	Re-opening a test allows a student to access a test that was submitted in error or has expired. If an expired test is re-opened, the test will re-open at the location at which the student stopped the assessment. The student will be able to review items within the current segment of the assessment, but cannot return to previous segments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A student is unable to complete a test due to a technological difficulty that results in the expiration of the test. A student is unable to complete the test before it expires (45 days for a CAT and 10 days for a PT) due to an extended absence or school closure. A student unintentionally submits a test before he or she has completed it—for example, a student submits the ELA PT before completing Part 2.
RESTORE	Restoring a test returns a test from the Reset status to its prior status. This action can only be performed on tests that have been reset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSDE may only restore a test if it was inadvertently or inappropriately reset.
GRACE PERIOD EXTENSION	A Grace Period Extension allows the student to review previously answered questions upon logging back into the test after expiration of the pause rule.	<p>The CSDE may grant a Grace Period Extension to re-open a test if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden loss of Internet access prevents a student from completing a test. A school event or evacuation takes place, such as a fire drill, interrupting the test administration. An unforeseen event that requires a student to access all parts of the test.
INVALIDATE	Invalidating a student's test eliminates the test. <i>The test will not be scored.</i>	<p>The CSDE may invalidate a test if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a test security breach that is discovered after the close of the testing window.

Please consider the following when requesting Appeals:

- Tests will expire after 10 calendars (PT) and 45 calendar days (CAT).
- If an accommodation/designated support needs to be adjusted in TIDE, it is best to wait 24 hours before administering the test so the accommodation/designated support is engaged in the Test Delivery System.
- A test that is re-opened following an expiration will remain open for 10 calendar days from the date it is re-opened.

For more information, see Section 7.0 of the [Test Administration Manual](#).

NCSC/CTAA and Skills Checklist Science Students in TIDE

All students who are administered the NCSC/CTAA and the Skills Checklist Science must have the [CTAA and CMT/CAPT Skills Checklists Science Eligibility & Learner Characteristics Inventory \(LCI\)](#) submitted on the [Accommodations Data Entry Web site](#). This list is used to delete students from [TIDE](#) since they are not administered the Smarter Balanced assessments. Updates made on the Accommodations Data Entry Web site will be reflected on TIDE.

NCSC/CTAA Important Information

The NCSC test window opened on **March 30, 2015**. NCSC Test Administrators are expected to complete all testing of eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities by **May 15, 2015**. In previous March *Student Assessment Newsletters*, it was indicated that NCSC Test Administrators must pass the final quiz on the [NCSC Assessment System](#) with a score of 80 percent or better in order to access their students on the NCSC system. Please work with district Special Education colleagues to ensure all Test Administrators have access to the NCSC Assessment System by confirming each Test Administrator's profile for accuracy. Please verify that the Test Administrator's correct e-mail address, name, district/school are correct and that they have begun accessing the NCSC Assessment System. Additionally, District Test Coordinators should have added any eligible students missing from the roster for assessment with the NCSC/CTAA in Language Arts and Math before Thursday, April 2, 2015. Once these students were added to the NCSC Assessment System they should also have been confirmed on the [CSDE Accommodations Data Collection Web site](#).



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Please review the NCSC Assessment System User Guide for Test Coordinators to assist you. It is available on the [NCSC Assessment System](#) on the Dashboard under Resources at the bottom of the web page. For information on how to add a Test Administrator see page 51 and for information on how to add a single student see page 64.

NCSC Test Security Protocol

The NCSC Test Security Protocol is described as a sign-off document in the NCSC Assessment System Training. Connecticut's teachers should follow the security procedures already established and monitored in their districts. **Therefore, the CSDE does not require a sign off provided to the state.** The CSDE does expect all teachers to be familiar with Connecticut's [Test Security Guidelines](#).

NCSC Scribe Protocol

The NCSC Scribe Protocol is described in the [NCSC Test Administration Manual](#) Appendix B page 36. The training created for all states describes the protocol as a sign-off document to be provided to the state. **Connecticut does not require a scribe protocol sign off.** Connecticut teachers need to ensure the scribe accommodation is entered into the [NCSC Assessment System](#) in the Accommodation tab of the student profile. The scribe accommodation should represent what is evident in the IEP and during instruction.

reminder

Smarter Balanced Test Information Distribution Engine and Public School Information System Data Sync

The CSDE refreshes the student-level data in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) daily by syncing the data between TIDE and the Public School Information System (PSIS) Registration Module. All changes to student enrollment and demographic information should be made in PSIS. **Changes made in PSIS may take up to 24 hours to appear in TIDE.** Any changes to a student's status at the time of testing should be made directly in the PSIS Registration Module. The PSIS Registration Module has been updated to include new fields for **Special Education, English Learner, and Economically Disadvantaged Status during testing**, so these fields can be modified to reflect a student's status at the time of testing. The CSDE copied the status for those variables from the January 2015 collection of PSIS into the student's registration record. In registration, these fields should reflect the student's status at the time of testing.

If the student did not have a change to any of these statuses between the January 2015 collection and at the time of testing, you will not need to update any of those fields in PSIS Registration. You will need to provide these statuses for students who:

- enrolled in your district after January 12, 2015; OR
- changed enrollment from a non-tested grade to a tested grade after January 12, 2015; OR
- had a status change at the time of testing.

Example: A student was identified as receiving special education services in the January 2015 collection, but was no longer receiving special education services in March 2015. In this example, you will need to change the Special Education status to "no" in Registration.

The grade in PSIS should always reflect the grade in which the student is being educated. Additionally, if two or more districts have the same student SASID actively registered in PSIS, TIDE will assign the student to the district with the latest district entry date.

reminder

Additional Participation Considerations for Smarter Balanced Testing

A new resource, [Additional Participation Considerations for Smarter Balanced Testing](#), is posted on the CT Portal as an addendum to the Online Summative Test Coordinator Manual, Section 4.1. The document provides additional guidance for districts and outlines testing policy for special student circumstances.

reminder

Documentation of Security Incidents: Use of Test Security Incident Log and Appeals System

School Coordinators (SC) and District Test Coordinators (DC) should ensure that all test security incidents are documented in the [Test Security Incident Log](#). Prior to the test administration, SCs or DCs are responsible for providing Teacher (TEs)/Test Administrators (TAs) with the [Test Security Incident Log](#) located at <http://CT.portal.airast.org>. It is recommended that DCs/SCs download the template and pre-populate the District ID and School ID fields. TEs/TAs must log incidents immediately upon identification and submit them, via e-mail or



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alternate district protocol, to their SCs/ DCs. District staff should establish a process that includes how frequently these logs should be submitted and communicate this preference to their staff. The description of each column header is included in the template. In addition to logging all test security incidents in the Test Security Incident Log, incidents requiring specific actions to be taken regarding the test itself are to be escalated via the Appeals module of TIDE. Districts will be asked to provide their Test Security Incident Log to the CSDE at the end of testing.

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Levy Gillespie
Equal Employment Opportunity Director/American with Disabilities Act Coordinator
Connecticut State Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT
860-807-2071
Levy.Gillespie@ct.gov

